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Commission on the Status of Women
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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls

High-level interactive dialogue: accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and achieving concrete results by 2020

Chair's summary

1. On 13 March 2018, the Commission on the Status of Women held an interactive dialogue on the topic "Accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and achieving concrete results by 2020".

2. The Vice-Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, Koki Muli Grignon, chaired and moderated the dialogue and made an introductory statement and closing remarks. Ministers and high-level government officials from 22 Member States and 11 invited speakers, representing diverse stakeholder groups, participated in the dialogue.

Policy measures to accelerate implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

3. Participants stressed their commitment to the accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and outlined action taken and investments made, or planned, to achieve concrete results by the year 2020, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Governments demonstrating leadership, prioritizing action for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and strengthening collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders to eliminate the discrimination and inequality faced by women

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and girls had resulted in accelerated progress. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals had contributed to momentum for action in support of women and girls.

4. Participants outlined laws, policies, national strategies and action plans that are being leveraged and developed to accelerate the implementation of gender equality commitments. Such measures included steps to integrate a gender perspective in policies and programmes, including fiscal, employment and poverty reduction strategies. Examples of comprehensive national gender equality strategies, of gender-sensitive services and of measures to reduce barriers to women's economic and political participation were presented. Investments in areas such as housing, childcare and skills development for women were discussed. Many examples of efforts to end violence against women were highlighted, including in reference to the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Speakers underscored the particular challenges facing women in conflict situations and highlighted commitments with respect to peace and security.

5. Speakers gave indications of progress, for example as measured by the growing number of women in political leadership positions, the percentage of national budgets allocated to gender equality and women's rate of participation in the labour force. Collecting sex-disaggregated data and practising gender-responsive budgeting were seen as important means of ensuring accountability and fostering the accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

6. Participants confirmed that working with a wide range of stakeholders, including grass-roots organizations, was a key component in successful implementation strategies. Multi-stakeholder partnerships and working across sectors were also mentioned, as were strategic partnerships between different government agencies and among different actors at the national and regional levels. Several speakers called for further engagement with young women and girls and with youth. Engaging men and boys and fostering positive masculinities and a culture of gender equality were key strategies for accelerating concrete results for gender equality, including in the areas of health and education.

7. In the context of the priority theme of the sixty-second session of the Commission, speakers presented their policy priorities in areas such as gender-responsive climate change action, women in agriculture, and rural sanitation, as well as sexual and reproductive health and family planning. The importance of addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls living in rural areas was also mentioned as a priority.

Contributions by stakeholders to accelerate implementation

8. Representatives from various stakeholder groups highlighted concrete action they have taken and will take to accelerate momentum and achieve concrete results by 2020 in the implementation of the Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

9. International and regional organizations played an important role in tracking progress in the implementation of global and regional gender equality commitments. Work by regional organizations to collect and analyse data had prompted regional policy responses, as reflected in regional conventions and protocols. Enhancing the collaboration between regional organizations, through the sharing of knowledge,

information and good practices, was considered an important means to accelerate implementation.

10. Speakers noted that national human rights institutions played a vital role in the promotion of and respect for the human rights of women and girls, given their independent status and expertise and their direct knowledge of the human rights situation in national contexts. Such institutions can leverage their mandates to support the accelerated implementation of gender equality commitments, by monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and promoting a human rights-based approach in the implementation of national development strategies. The participation of national human rights institutions in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women can contribute to further accelerating implementation.

11. Human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and mechanisms contribute to the implementation of commitments within their areas of expertise and mandate. Thematic reports prepared by the special procedures, such as the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, support the work of the Human Rights Council in its role of strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights. Speakers also emphasized that the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and of special procedures mandate holders, such as the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on violence against women, its causes and consequences, add impetus to the implementation of such commitments.

12. Participants highlighted the important role of the United Nations system, and in particular of the Rome-based agencies, in supporting Member States in efforts to empower rural women and girls, including by supporting the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. Implementation of the gender action plan under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa will enhance a gender-responsive approach to such issues as land degradation.

13. Speakers further stressed that gender perspectives must be integrated into the work of the entire system and in this regard, they called on the United Nations system to work more collaboratively, across the three dimensions of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental, to achieve concrete results by 2020. In this regard, participants highlighted that enhanced interaction among intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system, especially the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, can support accelerated implementation through the formulation of coordinated responses to persistent gaps and challenges in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.